

FLEET FOCUS

VP-47: Swordsmen say goodbye to families, Barbers Point

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and the members of Combat Aircrew Ten could not help but ponder the significance of that days flight. For more than 50 years, NAS Barbers Point served as home base for numerous Navy and Marine squadrons, and as a gateway to the Pacific for mainland squadrons passing through the islands.

The day before departure, Plane Commander Lt. Bill "Heater" Hearther and lead flight engineer Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (Safety Equipment) John Berridge ensured the aircraft was properly loaded for the 4,000 mile trip to Kadena, Okinawa.

Shortly before 7 a.m. on Sunday, the aircrew bid farewell to their loved ones and climbed aboard to begin their pre-flight. Junior Flight Engineer Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Randy Benson fueled the aircraft, while the plane commander and lead flight engineer conducted a final external inspection.

At Air Operations, second pilot Lt. Clay Christman checked the weather and filed the flight plan that would take them across the Pacific, including a refueling stop in Wake Island. The first leg would take a little more than six and one-half hours, while the second would take slightly more than seven hours.

Tactical Coordinator Lt. Nardo Day orchestrated the tube pre-flight. Navigator Communicator Lt.j.g. Chuck Grant conducted HF radio checks and ensured his charts were in order, while radar operator Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator 1st Class Jeff Carter completed operational checks of the

APS-115. Inflight Technician Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Mike Bacon handled a few last minute gripes, while Acoustic Operators AW1 Sean Haggerty and AW3 John Williams provided an emergency brief to the skeleton crew of maintainers who traveled with the crew in the event in-route repairs were required.

At 8:30 a.m., the crew conducted the standard plane side brief. The brief consisted primarily of weather, terrain, standard procedures and emergency procedures for the days flight. Shortly, thereafter Christman put clearance on request and obtained permission to start engines.

By 8:42 a.m., Hearther started engines and taxied to runway 11. During taxi, the flight station completed the takeoff checklist while Day verified the tube security, by ensuring both the aircrew and gear were securely strapped in. By 8:55 a.m., "Sword-02, Barbers' Tower — cleared for take-off Runway 11."

Christman responded to the final words from NAS Barbers Point Tower, "Sword-02 cleared for take-off." Following those words, Berridge set take-off power and RD-998 rumbled down the Barbers Point runway for the last time. At 126 KTS, Christman called "rotate." Hearther responded shortly afterwards with the gear up call.

As Sword-02 went "feet wet" over Nimitz Beach, Christman called, "Sword-02 switching departure." So long Barbers Point.

Following their deployment, the Swordsmen will return directly to their new home at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.



J01 David Nagle photos

AMS2 Donnie White (left) spends a few final moments with his wife, Holly and daughter Zoe, as the aircrew (above) begins boarding the P-3C Orion. After takeoff, the final P-3C to leave NAS Barbers Point makes a pass over the runway (below).



J01 David Nagle photo

VP-4: Skinny Dragons return from deployment to new home at K-Bay

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came on board as executive officer.

Upon reaching Diego Garcia, many combat aircrews and maintenance personnel touched down and immediately departed to detachment sites in the Arabian Gulf to take part in Operation Desert Fox. The Skinny Dragons proved to be an invaluable asset in the region both during the operation and in the months to follow. VP-4 also innovated new uses for the newest asset to the fleet, the Anti-Surface Warfare Improvement Program (AIP) version of the P-3C aircraft.

Another real world operation that the Skinny Dragons took part in while on deployment was Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. On April 11, VP-4 sent one of their aircrews, maintenance support personnel and two AIP aircraft to Sigonella, Sicily to support Sixth Fleet operations and Operation Allied Force. Sixth Fleet, and the Lancers of VP-10 from Brunswick Maine, were extremely impressed with VP-4 Crew 10's knowledge of the AIP aircraft and how to maximize its utilization in combat operations.

This raw display of the mighty Orion's capabilities during Operations Desert Fox and Allied Force did not go unnoticed by the senior military leadership. Army Gen. Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the squadron's Masirah, Oman detachment in Muscat and spoke about the Iraqi and Bosnian conflicts and about how much he depended on the deployed forces of the combined Armed Forces. He specifically mentioned the superb role that VP-4's AIP P-3Cs provided in the combat environments of Iraq and Bosnia.

Vice Adm. Charles Moore, Commander, Naval Forces Central Command, addressed the detachment in Bahrain and stated, "You should be proud of what you are doing here in the Middle East region." He commented that VP-4's impeccable mission accomplishment record has been instrumental in enforcing United Nations trade sanctions against Iraq. The 99.8 percent mission accomplishment record in the Arabian Gulf is a direct reflection on the superb professionalism of the Skinny Dragon maintenance team.

Operating from six sites throughout the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Fleets posed numerous logistics challenges for the personnel and aircraft of VP-4. Yet, in addition to conducting real world operational flights, the Skinny Dragons found the time to conduct numerous exercises and strengthen the military



VP-4 photo

AOAN Taisha Wahab, AW2 Allen Buckspan, AO3 Joseph Paul and AW2 Christian Hauserman load an AGM-65 Maverick missile onto a P-3C Orion while deployed in the Arabian Gulf region.

bond with many allied countries both in and out of the Arabian Gulf region. Maritime Surveillance Exercise (MAR-SURVEX) 1999, Exercise Infinite Shadow'99 and Exercise Tandem Thrust were just three of the multi-lateral exercises in which the squadron participated.

MARSURVEX marked the first series of joint exercises between the Philippines and the U.S. since the closing of the U.S. Naval facilities at Subic Bay in 1991. Infinite Shadow'99 represented the first military exercise with Jordan, Egypt and the U.S. participating together, and Tandem Thrust'99 saw the first live fire Maverick missile shot from an AIP aircraft and the first P-3 Maverick shot in Seventh Fleet. CAC-9 and CAC-4 conducted exercise Tandem Thrust '99 with assets from the United States, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and South Korea. Ships and aircraft from these countries conducted live fire exercises on the Ex-USS Oklahoma City.

The Skinny Dragon's hub of operations this deployment and its numerous detachments was Diego Garcia, commonly referred to as "Dodge" by squadron personnel. This small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean was instrumental to all of the planning, de-

cision making, and maintenance support for the crews deployed to Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Japan and Italy. The combat aircrews based out of Diego Garcia performed Search and Rescue (SAR) and Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) Ready Alert rotations that spanned the entire Indian Ocean and proved invaluable in the saving of numerous lives throughout the course of the deployment.

The Skinny Dragons of VP-4 were the vanguards of a new era of maritime patrol aviation. They demonstrated the awesome force that comes as a result of dedication and teamwork during their six-site Arabian Gulf/Western Pacific/Mediterranean deployment. Proving time and again that the mighty Orion is an invaluable asset during real world conflicts through Operations Desert Fox in Iraq to Allied Force in Kosovo, the Skinny Dragons have showcased their expertise in operations spanning four fleets and well over half of the globe from Hawaii to Italy. The Skinny Dragons are proud to return to their new home and families in Kaneohe Bay knowing that they have truly made a difference.

And by the way Taylor, your daddy's home!

FTSCPAC volunteers help Manana Elementary students strive for success

by FTSCPAC Pearl Harbor

Fifty one 5th and 6th grade students from Manana Elementary competed in the annual Pearl City Elementary Track and Field meet at Pearl City High School recently.

Chief Petty Officer Johnson, one of three volunteer military coaches from Fleet Technical Support Center Pacific, Detachment Pearl Harbor, said "The boys and girls worked hard for the past three months in preparation for the event. They are a small school and have no dedicated physical education teacher, unlike some of the other seven competing schools".

Chief Electronics Technician (SW) Mitchell said "Not only were we concerned with their physical preparation, but also with teaching good sportsmanship and fair play, along with the principles of hard work and dedication in seeing a project through to

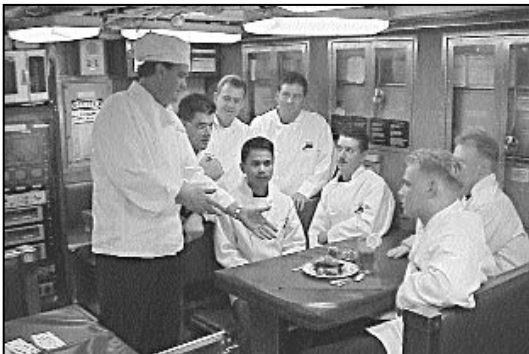
completion.

The boys and girls were excited and a little nervous when they first arrived at the field and saw how big the track was. However all the butterflies were gone after the first race. "They gave everything they had and did an outstanding job," said Chief Data Systems Technician (SW) Lawrence Kotrys with a big smile on his face.

Because Manana is a small school, most of the participants had to run two or three events against other teams that had fresh runners for each event. Although they faced larger squads the Manana track team was up to the challenge, ending up with two first place, seven second place and one third place finishes. "We're very proud of the entire team" said Mrs. Luster, a Manana teacher.

"Just wait till next year!" said the entire fifth grade class.

Chef shares recipe for success with Buffalo MS's



USS Buffalo photo

For two days on a recent U.S.-Japanese exercise, USS Buffalo (SSN 715) had the opportunity to embark Rick E. Scott, Executive Chef at the Tokyo-American Club in Tokyo, Japan. Scott took a peek at almost every aspect of life on a fast attack submarine, from sitting at the helm and looking out the periscope to the enviable experience of sleeping in a 21/2 x 7-foot "rack," similar to those used by the rest of the crew. He also visited with the boat's mess management specialists and gave them a few tips for food service excellence. He commended the MS's for their dedication and for the quality of the food served on board. Scott worked as a chef in 14 countries and whose venues have included palaces and some of the world's finest restaurants.